

No man could work as Hunter did without experiencing, sooner or later, a breakdown. The life-strings were bound to lose their elasticity and snap under such a strain. And the breakdown did come. In 1759 he suffered a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs. The disease weakened the vital powers and he did not build up very rapidly after it. Consequently, the year following, he was advised to go abroad, "having complaints in his breast which threatened to be consumptive." In the following October, then, he was appointed a staff surgeon in the army by Robert Adair, who was with the army at the siege of Quebec. In 1761 he went with the fleet, under General Hodgson and Commodore Keppel, to Belleisle—an island near the coast of France, which was eventually captured. The next year brought war with Spain, and he left, as staff surgeon, on the expedition that was to protect Portugal, which was then allied with England. But even during those two years with the army Hunter did not neglect his medical researches. It was during these days that he gathered material for his great work, "Treatise on the Blood, Inflammation, and Gunshot Wounds"—written thirty years later and published one year after his death. It was a notable work, covering five hundred and seventy-five pages, and contained, also, some physiological observations on digestion and on the organ of hearing in fishes. He always resorted to simple methods of discovery. Thus he tells us how he discovered the sense of hearing in fishes: "In the year 1762, when I was in Portugal, I observed in a nobleman's garden, near Lisbon, a small fish pond full of different kinds of fish. The bottom was level with the ground—the pond having been made by forming a bank all round—and had a shrubbery close to it. Whilst I lay on the bank observing the fish swimming about, I desired a gentleman who was with me to take a loaded gun and fire it from behind the shrubs. The moment the report was made the fish seemed to be all of one mind, for they vanished instantly, raising a cloud of mud from the bottom."

During all these years John was abroad William worked assiduously at London. "He never married," writes Paget; "he had no country-house; he looks, in his portraits, a fastidious, fine gentleman, but he worked till he dropped and he lectured when he was dying." In May, 1763, John returned to London, rented apartments in Golden Square, and started practice as a surgeon. While John was abroad William took every precaution to protect and proclaim his brother's discoveries in anatomy. In 1762 he published his "Medical Commentaries, Part I."—"surely," writes Paget, "one of the strangest books that a physician or a surgeon ever wrote. From beginning to end, it is an incessant attack on those who discovered what the brothers also discovered; every